



The Communications Issue

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Do you have topic ideas? Comments or questions?

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Overview

A major concern that individuals sense at work is a lack of communications. In fact this is the number one complaint we at CCCC hear from our dozens of client companies in all parts of the world. The single most dysfunctional aspect of communication is listening. And this gets complicated further by emotions so often entering into the dialog and effectively sealing off the listening. When we get involved, CCCC likes to focus on activities that ensure a company-wide listening improvement, as this is the largest problem of all.

The biggest Problem of All – Not Listening

Lack of cooperation slows every firm down, exacerbated by lack of solid communications. The single most destructive part of communications is not listening – as we all know. We, at CCCC, like to put it another way. As we educate our clients about the Evolution Pyramid that shows how a company grows, succeeds and then dies, we were able to attribute reasons for any company's eventual decline. The right-hand side of the Pyramid shows companies sliding down the slippery slope to their eventual demise. The Pyramid shows that companies have an evolutionary personality of PAVF that changes at each of ten stages of evolution. Companies reach a balance of PAVF at *Excellence*, the place where we hope to direct our CCCC clients. The common characteristic of a company in decline (on the right hand side of the Pyramid) is a reduction and loss of V, Visioning. (You may request this Pyramid chart from the author; if so, please take a second to look at the chart to observe how V declines.)

But what is Visioning? It is listening to feedback so that the true situation or path can be seen and the company can adjust to it; that is, create a vision for it. Thus, the answer is that the common feature of companies in decline is a lack of listening.

Below we will list several corporate listening challenges, which have become the primary tool of CCCC for working with and improving an enterprise. That is, given the freedom to proceed,

we introduce listening mechanisms to reduce threats, encourage group participation, increase cooperation and thus improve overall performance, economic stability and viability of the company. We observe that a 10% increase in cooperation will lead to a 30% improvement in performance.

Listening

As stated above, the key to prevent an organization from growing old and dying is 'listening'. Listening must be multi-faceted and be a constant endeavour in any company. Some necessary components to 'listening' are:

- i. Quarterly reviews – for each employee
- ii. Problem Management Council – management and staff monthly meeting to review current issues
- iii. Suggestion Box – a system that is constantly at work
- iv. Open Door Policy – of boss
- v. Customer Questionnaires – conducted quarterly or at planned phases of a contract
- vi. Weekly meetings – of every operational group in the company
- vii. Annual planning, and
- viii. Semi-annual planning
- ix. Maintaining equality of privileges and perks among all staff – offices, etc.

We recommend the introduction of all of the above concepts into the company over no less than a one-year time frame to transform it into a steadily improving enterprise.

Conclusion

Already progressive companies have embraced some items of i to ix and are on a better path than most organizations – but there is always room for improvement.

Good luck

Bill Caswell